

quality of life



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In January 2000, California schools were given their first Academic Performance Index (API) scores, based on 1999 results, and a target for growth. Schools were ranked statewide and against schools with similar socioeconomic characteristics. The API is based on the Stanford 9, a standardized basic skills test that is given each spring to students in grades 2 through 11. The scores released in January 2001 indicated that 17 percent of California's public schools met the state target for academic accomplishment, a five-point improvement over 1999.

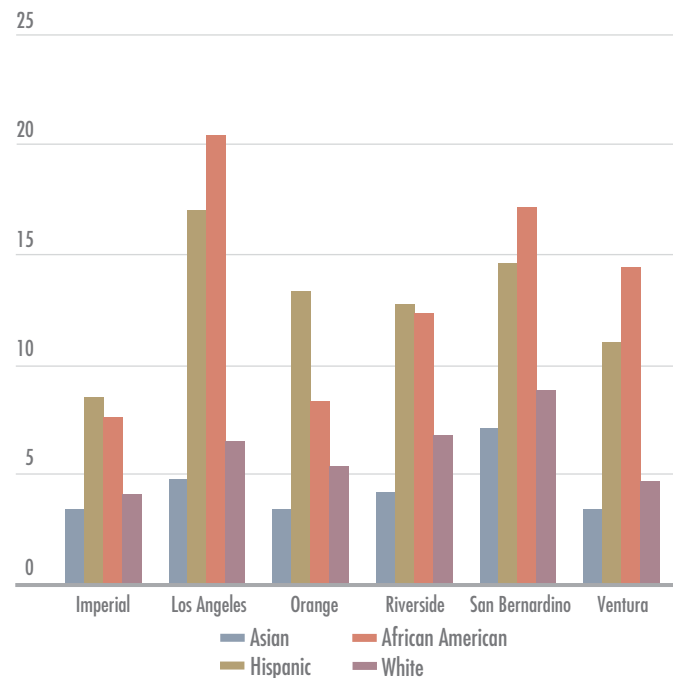
Education

>> *Education is one of the most important indicators of the economic health and social vitality of a community. Good education helps citizens achieve their full potential. In addition, a skilled workforce is necessary to compete in a global economy.* <<

California's class of 2000 recorded a graduation rate of 68.7 percent, up slightly over the previous year's 68.3 percent. The four-year dropout rate for the state remained at 11 percent, the same level as the previous year. The

dropout rates are estimates, since individual student data to create accurate dropout rates are not available. The California School Information Services Program (CSIS), projected to be completed by 2005, is intended to develop standards to facilitate reporting data to the state.

Figure 26
Dropout Rates by Ethnicity in Public High Schools, 1999-2000
(Percent)

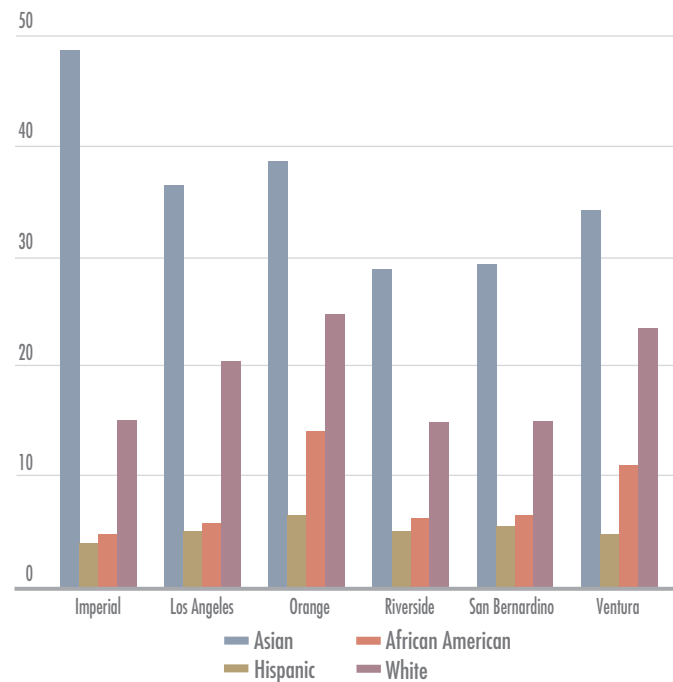


Source: California Department of Education

The dropout rates in the region for the 1999-2000 school year by county were 7.6 percent in Imperial, 13.8 percent in Los Angeles, eight percent in Orange, 9.6 percent in Riverside, 12.1 percent in San Bernardino, and 7.3 percent in Ventura. When comparing the dropout rates among ethnic groups, Asian students had the lowest dropout rates in each county. The highest dropout rates in Imperial, Orange, and Riverside counties were among Hispanic students, while African American students had the highest dropout rates in Los Angeles, San Bernardino, and Ventura counties.

<< *A strong general education is essential to ensure a more prosperous future for everyone in the community. The performance of students on standardized tests is an indicator of the students' ability to gain admittance to colleges and universities and acquire the skills to compete for quality jobs.* >>

Figure 27
12th Grade Students in Public Schools
Meeting Criteria on SAT/ACT Tests, 1999-2000
(Percent)



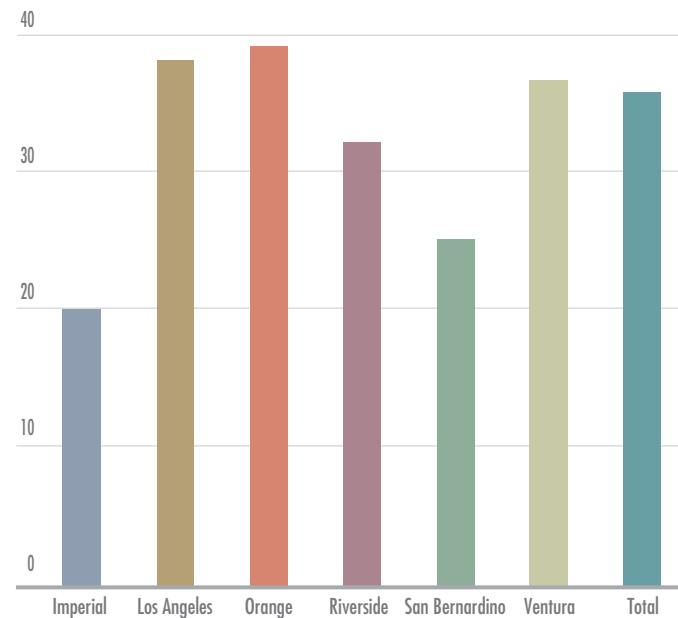
Source: California Department of Education

The Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and the American College Testing (ACT) are administered to high school students for admission to colleges and universities. The SAT measures verbal and mathematical reasoning abilities.

The ACT measures educational development in English, math, social studies, and natural sciences. Nationwide criteria are a score of 1000 or better on the SAT test and 21 or better on the ACT test. Top educators throughout the country have been discussing the effectiveness of the SAT as a measure to determine the level of preparedness of high school students and their potential for success in college. Presidents of colleges and universities across the nation agree the SAT is flawed, but most defend the test as an important tool until such time as a better measure is found.

The proportion of students in the region, by county, meeting the nation's criteria for both SAT and ACT tests in 1999-2000 was: 7.5 percent in Imperial, 17 percent in Los Angeles, 27 percent in Orange, 13 percent in both Riverside and San Bernardino, and 21 percent in Ventura. The total for the state was 19 percent for both SAT and ACT tests.

Figure 28
12th Grade Graduates in Public Schools
Meeting UC or CSU Course Entrance Requirements, 1999-2000
(Percent)



Source: California Department of Education

As in previous years, only about one-third of all high school students in the region took the necessary courses in the 1999-2000 school year to meet the requirements for admission to the University of California or the California State University systems.

The Cal State system has increased its efforts to help high school juniors and seniors improve their English and math skills before college, and it has cracked down on unprepared students.

The Board of Trustees has directed the Cal State system to reduce remedial education to no more than 10 percent of freshmen by 2007. More than six percent of the Cal State freshmen class of 2000 were dropped for failing to meet the required English and math skills within the first year of class. In the summer of 2000, a total of 2,009 students throughout the system were notified that they could not re-enroll as sophomores. The students were instructed to attend a community college to be prepared to pass Cal State's placement tests in math and English.

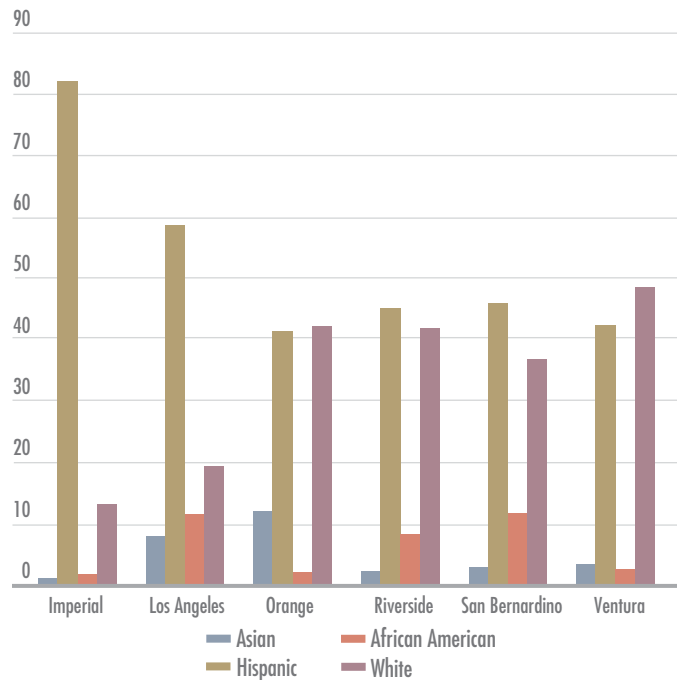
When comparing the percent of first-time freshmen in the class of 2000 in the Cal State university system across the state, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo had the lowest rate of students who had to enroll in remedial math. Cal State Dominguez Hills had the highest rate of students needing help. (See Table 11.)

Table 11
Freshman Students in the California State University System
Needing Remedial Help
Percent of All Students Needing Help

Cal State Campus	Remedial Math			Remedial English		
	1998	1999	2000	1998	1999	2000
Dominguez Hills	87%	81%	79%	80%	77%	76%
Fullerton	54%	46%	41%	51%	51%	49%
Long Beach	59%	54%	51%	53%	51%	51%
Los Angeles	77%	74%	68%	79%	75%	75%
Northridge	63%	55%	60%	59%	59%	57%
Cal Poly Pomona	39%	35%	34%	5%	53%	53%
San Bernardino	72%	71%	67%	57%	62%	57%
Cal Poly San Luis Obispo	16%	15%	14%	17%	15%	18%
Cal State Average	54%	48%	45%	47%	46%	46%

Source: California State University

Figure 29
Enrollment in Public Schools by Ethnicity, 1999-2000
 (Percent)



Source: California Department of Education

Table 12
Public School Characteristics, 2000-2001

County	Pupil/ Teacher Ratio	Average Class Size	Students per Computer
Imperial	20	25	5
Los Angeles	21	26	8
Orange	22	28	8
Riverside	21	27	8
San Bernardino	22	28	7
Ventura	22	27	7
California	21	26	7

Source: California Department of Education

Public Safety

<< *The level of crime is a key indicator of quality of life. In national surveys, safety and good schools are among the main considerations in individuals' assessment of the quality of life in their communities.* >>

According to 1999 statistics, reported serious crime in the nation decreased for the eighth consecutive year. Compared to 1998, declines in both volume and rate were recorded in all violent crime categories (murder, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) and in all property crime categories. The total violent and property crimes declined by seven percent. The 1999 Crime Index rate for the nation was 19 percent below the 1995 rate and 27 percent lower than the 1990 rate. From 1998 to 1999,

murder and robbery decreased by eight percent, aggravated assault by six percent, and forcible rape by four percent. The property crimes of burglary, motor vehicle theft, and larceny-theft decreased by ten, eight, and six percent respectively.

Preliminary 2000 data indicate that the years of declining crime rates have ended, with the crime index virtually unchanged between 1999 and 2000. Violent crime in the nation rose slightly, by one-tenth of a percent, while property crime remained unchanged.

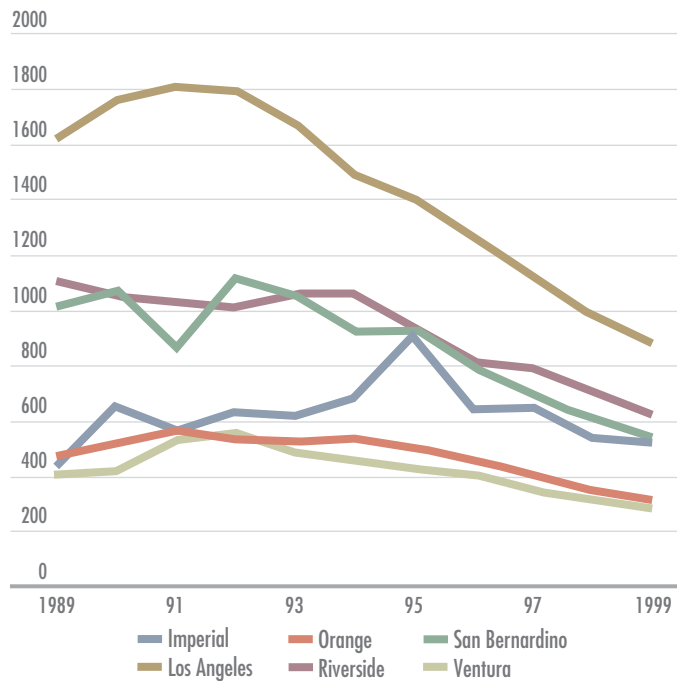
Table 13
Crime in the Nation, 1999
Crime Index Rate per 100,000 Population

Region	Index Rate
South	4,932
West	4,328
Midwest	4,041
Northeast	3,233
Metro Areas	4,600
Cities Outside Metro Areas	4,561
Rural Counties	1,901

Source: U.S. Department of Justice

California's crime rate in 1999 had the largest single-year decrease ever, and, for the eighth consecutive year, reported crime in the state decreased for all six major crime categories. Violent crimes in 1999 decreased by 11 percent from the prior year, with homicides decreasing by nine percent, robberies by 14 percent, forcible rapes by five percent, and aggravated assault by 10 percent. Property crimes decreased by 17 percent, with burglaries and motor vehicle theft decreasing by 18 and 15 percent respectively. Overall, the arrest rate in the state was down 6.5 percent from 1998 to 1999, with felony arrests decreasing nine percent for adults and 12 percent for juveniles. The number of robberies reported in 1999 (60,027) were less than half the 1992 total, when they peaked over 130,000. The 15 percent decrease in crime in 1999 marks the largest one-year drop in the California Crime Index since the current reporting standards were established in the early 1950s. Preliminary 2000 data, however, indicate a rise in crime in California and other Western states between 1999 and 2000, the first time since 1991 that there has been an increase in crime in the West.

Figure 30
Violent Crime Rate per 100,000 Population

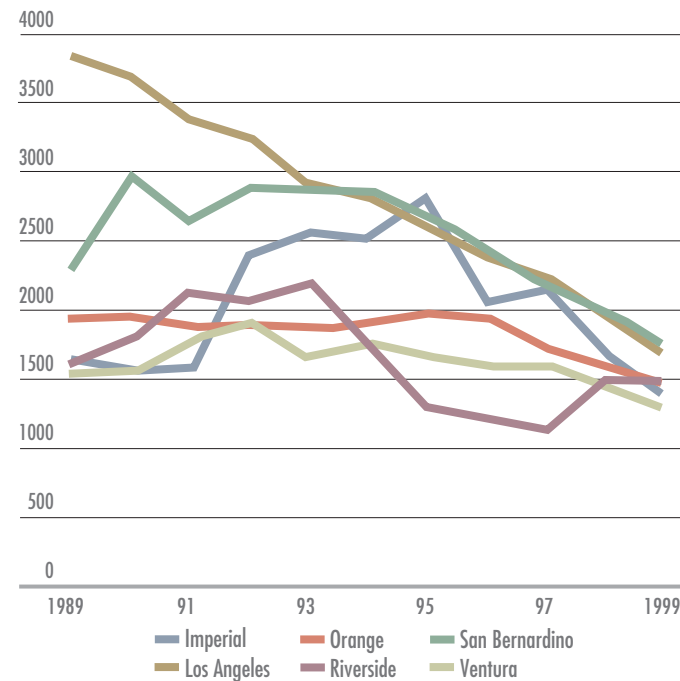


Source: California Department of Justice


Following national trends, the region has experienced a lower rate of violent crime every year since the recession year of 1992. The region's 1999 FBI crime rate of 697 violent crimes per 100,000 population is almost half the

1992 rate of 1,383. Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, and Ventura counties experienced a decrease in violent crimes of nine to ten percent between 1998 and 1999. The 1999 crime rate was 11 percent lower in Riverside County and three percent lower in Imperial County than the previous year.

Figure 31
Juvenile Felony Arrests per 100,000 Population



Source: California Department of Justice



The region also experienced a steady decline in the rate of juvenile felony arrests throughout the 1990s. The 1999 rate of juvenile arrests per 100,000 population was 1,581, compared to 3,065 in 1989. Every county, except Riverside, experienced a double digit decline in the rate of juvenile felony arrests in 1999 from the previous year. After a 30 percent hike in 1998 in the felony arrest rate for juveniles in Riverside County, the rate fell by under two percent in 1999. Still, Riverside County has only the third highest rate in the region, behind San Bernardino and Los Angeles counties.

Adolescent Use of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs

The preliminary findings of the Eighth Biennial California Student Survey indicate that overall drug use by California students has declined for the first time in a decade, but the use of heroine by eleventh graders has increased. The survey also shows the level of excessive alcohol and drug use by heavy users remains unchanged. The survey measured student substance use in the 1999-2000 school year by surveying 12,777 students in grades 7, 9, and 11. State law requires such a survey to monitor, understand, and prevent adolescent use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

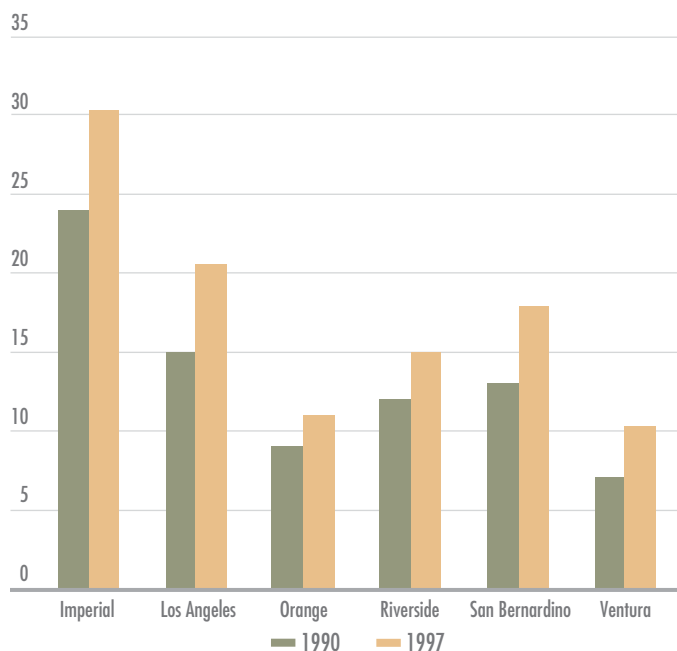
According to the survey, 20 percent of seventh graders, 26 percent of ninth graders, and 39 percent of eleventh graders reported using an illicit drug at least once in the past six months. These percentages are lower than 1997-98, largely as a result of diminished use of marijuana and inhalants. Alcohol consumption by students fell for the first time in 15 years. However, alcohol remains the most popular substance used by students. Marijuana use among ninth and eleventh graders has decreased after a large increase in its use during the first half of the decade, a trend peaking in 1995 before leveling off in 1997.

The use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs by students in California appears to be declining more than national trends. Up to 1977, the California Student Survey results were consistent with national rates. However, the national results for 1999 reached a plateau or showed only a moderate decline compared to California's.

Poverty

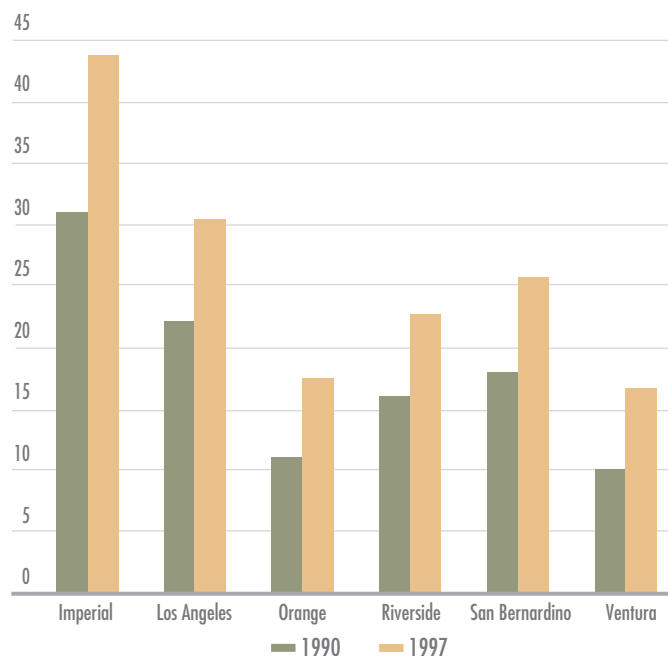
<< Prosperous cities and suburbs are not immune from the problems of the economically disadvantaged areas of the region. Social needs multiply in areas of concentrated poverty. The costs of increased social services imposes a heavy burden on a region's competitive position. >>

Figure 32
Population in Poverty
(Percent)



Source: US Bureau of the Census

Figure 33
Children in Poverty
(Percent)



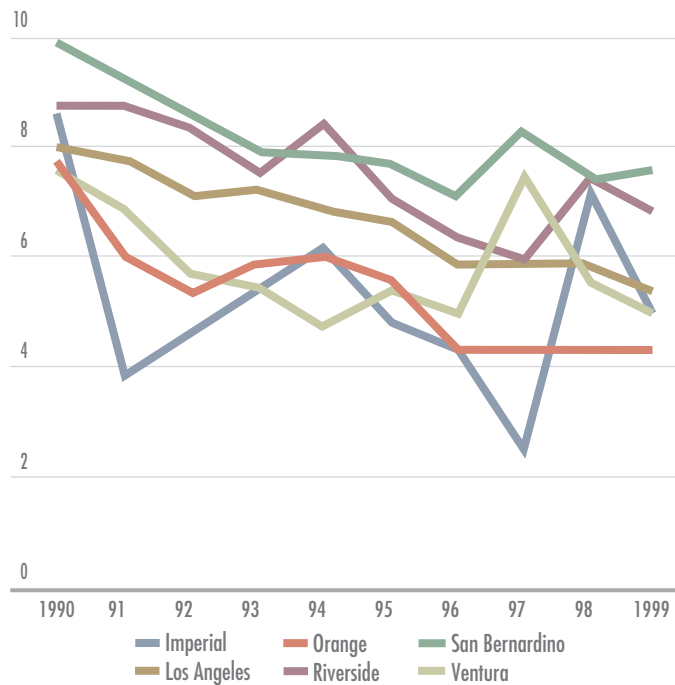
Source: US Bureau of the Census

More than 2.8 million people in the region in 1997 (the latest data available for this report) met the criteria to be considered living in poverty. In Imperial County, 24 percent of the population lived in poverty. The total number of children living in poverty in the region was 1.2 million. Almost one-third of all children in Imperial County and 22 percent of children in Los Angeles County were living in poverty.

Infant Mortality

<< *Infant mortality is an indicator of social and economic conditions and how a society cares for children.* >>

Figure 34
Infant Mortality per 1,000 Live Births
 (Percent)



Source: California Department of Health Services



The infant mortality rate in the region has gone down since the 1980s. The 1999 rate was 5.5 percent, compared to six percent in 1998. Except for a slight increase in San Bernardino County, every county in the region had a lower infant mortality rate in 1999 than the previous year. (Data for 2000 were not available for this report.)